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ABSTRACT

Oppression in the United States can be described as a mental/spiritual and social/material domination that is fueled by manipulation and alienation. Manipulation and alienation play a prominent role in the lives of Xicanas/os (a broadening of the term "Chicana/o" to include all indigenous peoples in the United States and Latin America) because of their historical/indigenous connection to the land. This historical connection poses a power struggle and makes it necessary for society to silence Xicana/o voices to maintain their subordination. The educational system is one means used to perpetuate the domination of Xicanas/os. Hidden curricula propagate racist practices by not acknowledging or encouraging Xicanas/o experiences and by offering only information that is considered acceptable. The false consciousness thus created produces passive, noncritical students that view reality through the lens of the invader. Conscientization, or the lifting of the veil, is accomplished through a dialogical matrix that consists of cooperation, unification, organization, and cultural action. Cooperation represents dialogue among Xicanas/os and all other oppressed groups. Unification emerges when Xicanas/os and other oppressed groups realize how and why the limitations exist. Organization emerges when Xicanas/os re-create the limits because they are no longer mere spectators. Cultural action occurs when Xicanas/os act to de-mystify the myths that have kept them subjugated, become authors of their own reality, and self-determine their role in society. (Contains 12 references.) (TD)

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Running head: XICANAS(OS) CLAIMING AUTHENTIC VOICE

The Process of Conscientization

Xicanas(os) Experience in Claiming Authentic Voice

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Introduction

When I was a child, I can recall not understanding how things could be so different from one family to the next. I remember my mother working, long hours, to assure we had a roof over our heads and food to eat while my classmates' mothers enjoyed the luxury of not needing to work. I would always ask myself why was it like this?

In school, I remember, being one of three Xicanas(os)[1] in my classroom, which was fine by me, until I realized the teacher treated us differently. The teacher disrespected me because I was not dominant in English, and I came from a culturally different background, with low socio-economic status. My classmates took notice and replicated her behavior. With time, invitations to birthday parties or community functions ceased for me unless they took place on my side of town. From these experiences, I understood that our economic situation and cultural background

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had a definite impact on how people treated me. It angered me because it did not matter how hard I worked, my status, remained the same.

At a young age, I succumbed to the messages given by my school, mass media, and the community at large, which led me to believe that I had less worth than my White counterparts. I was convinced that in order for me to succeed I had to give up my identity. I was made to feel like a second-class citizen because of my socio-economic status, my Spanish language, and because I lived in a run down community. I became ashamed of my mother's cultural heritage and came to see it as inferior. I desperately attempted to assimilate and create an identity that rejected who I was as a Xicana in order to be accepted in the dominant culture. I took on a new *persona*, a new reality that led to the silence of my *Authentic Voice*.

Although, as a little girl, I did not conceptualize or articulate the experiences I endured in the manner that I do now, I definitely knew that differences existed among families, communities, and society overall. I understood as well that these economic and social differences created an unfair community.

The experiences of oppression in the United States can be described as a mental/spiritual and social/material domination that is fueled by manipulation and alienation (See Marion Young for a more in depth analysis on the role of materialism in defining oppression for U.S. people of color). Manipulation and alienation play a prominent role in the lives of Xicanas(os) born and reared in the United States because of the historical/indigenous connection that exists in the region. The ancestors of Xicanas(os) migrated throughout the United States, Mexico, Central, and South America before the colonial era. The link to this land, the raising of our families, and perspective on life that exists specifically in the United States, grounds Xicanas(os) historically to the communities they continue to live in. This historical connection poses a power struggle

and makes it necessary for society to silence the voices of Xicanas(os) in order to maintain their domination. Xicanas(os) who live under these conditions are now resisting and challenging the injustices experienced in everyday life. This paper is a theoretical piece written to illuminate the structures in place that carry out this domination and put into perspective the process of conscientization Xicanas(os) experience in claming their *Authentic Voice*.

Conceptual Framework

The framework of conscientization is an ongoing process of reflection, interaction with others, and action that helps solidify a Xicana(o)'s authentic voice. The process in and of itself does not take place in a vacuum, it can be gradual or accelerated depending on the conditions created to dialogue and reflect (A. Darder, personal communication, March 4, 2002). Dialogue and reflection become essential to naming one's experience in the world and conceptualize it within a historical framework. In the context of a Xicana(o) framework "authentic" becomes the act of naming the reality in which one exists with the understanding that reality is never static and always changing. Darder (1995) states it is a worldview, a historical outlook that puts into perspective the experiences Xicanas(os) confront in the United States. "Voice" becomes the political action that challenges the domination that wants to keep Xicanas(os) nameless and voiceless (hooks, 1989). Voice becomes the means to rupture the silence to transform the reality (Darder, 1995). "Authentic Voice," in its totality, becomes as hooks (1989) says a process of healing to help guide Xicanas(os) in transforming the world, and allowing them to move from object to subject. However, in the United States, this is a process difficult to initiate and experience due to capitalism and cultural hegemony.

Capitalism in the United States

For whose purpose does the subjugation and silence of Xicanas(os) and others exist? Capitalism exists in many regions of the world. The United States government is viewed as the umbilical cord that gives life to this entity (Darder, 1998). This country sustains itself as a capitalist society by maintaining a principle goal, to make profit. The belief is that we all benefit from this profit, but as stated earlier, the wealth and prosperity are only for a chosen few.

The United States government goes to great lengths to hide its increasing levels of, inequalities, and exploitations (Johnson, 2000). For example, Johnson (2000) states that,

> The richest 10 percent of the U.S. population holds more that two-thirds of all the wealth, including almost 90 percent of cash, almost half the land, more than 90 percent of business assets, and almost all stocks and bonds. (p. 45)

This inequity only serves to perpetuate a huge gap between those who have the power and those who do not (Johnson, 2000). To maintain economic and political power, the dominant culture must impose cultural hegemony based on the theory of a "colonial legacy" (Macedo, 1998, p. XXVII) to convince, for example, Xicanas(os) of their second-class status. A colonial legacy in conjunction with cultural hegemony is detrimental to the existence of Xicanas(os) because it facilitates as McLaren (1989) suggests the consent of the oppressed while simultaneously letting the oppressed play an active role in their own oppression. Xicanas(os), in this context, are not given the opportunity to study critically their realities, which includes the understanding of their language, culture, gender, ethnicity, and class position (Macedo, 1998). Cultural hegemony sets the environment in which people do not question why there is not enough wealth to go around

and take it at face value that the institutions under the government umbrella are representing the interests of all groups involved (McLaren, 1989).

Hegemony and the Xicana(o) Experience

Xicanas(os) are indigenous to the land they live on. The land is the connection to their identity and understanding of life. This connection is a threat to the growth of capitalism, in the United States, therefore making it necessary to impose on Xicanas(os) a dehumanizing cultural hegemony. When Xicanas(os) enter the schooling system, they come with a sense of displacement. Xicanas(os) are not sure how to view themselves or how to view their role in the world. Even if a student does not view them self as displaced they are still in a "culturally subordinate position because they have been raised within the sociocultural and class constraints dictated by the dominant culture" (Darder, 1991, p. 59). The following statement by Constantino (as cited in Macedo, 1998) reflects the effects of a colonial legacy when fused with cultural hegemony:

> We see our present with as little understanding as we view our past because aspects of the past, which could illuminate the present, have been concealed from us. This concealment has been effected by a systemic process of mis-education characterized by a thoroughgoing inculcation of colonial values and attitudes – a process which could not have been so effective had we not been denied access to the truth and to be part of our written history. As a consequence, we have become a people without a sense of history. We accept the present as given, bereft of

> historicity. Because we have so little comprehension of our past, we have not appreciation of its meaningful interrelation with the present. (p. xxviii)

The educational system is one means used to perpetuate confusion, displacement, and ultimately the subordination of Xicanas(os). The hidden curricula propagate racist practices in schools and classrooms that construct the knowledge and behavior of Xicanas(os) (Darder, 1995; McLaren, 1989). For Xicanas(os) this means compromising to the dominant culture's ideologies and social practices related to authenticity, behavior, and morality (McLaren, 1989). A banking concept (Freire, 1970) is embedded, in the hidden curricula, wherein teachers see themselves as the depositors of knowledge. Teachers take on the role of all knowing, and do not acknowledge or encourage the experiences Xicanas(os) bring to school. The teachers find the need to fill the minds of Xicanas(os) with information that is acceptable and considered valid knowledge.

The banking method set up Xicanas(os) to take on a false consciousness (Freire, 1970). This false consciousness produces passive, non-critical students. Within this passivity, Xicanas(os) do not question injustices or inequalities they experience as individuals or as a community. Not thinking for oneself or understanding the reality in which Xicanas(os) exist results in a loss of "thought-language" (Collins, 2000, p. 212). Collins (2000) defines thought language as "a process of creating knowledge which is what men [and women] use to create and re-create reality...Because reality is a process, thinking and knowing are also unfinished" (p. 212). This loss does not allow Xicanas(os) to historically situate their place in society. Since Xicanas(os) cannot speak of what they do not know, they lose the authenticity and connection to their identity and culture both of which are in a constant state of reflection and transformation (Collins, 2000).

The cultural hegemony that perpetuates subjugation and oppression of Xicanas(os) manifests itself in what Freire (1970) has described as the four anti-dialogical matrices; *conquest, divide and rule, manipulation and cultural invasion.* In relation to the Xicana(o) experience this framework begins when Xicanas(os) enter school. Xicanas(os) are *conquered* by an imposed hidden curriculum that emphasizes a banking method and loss of thought-language (Collins, 2000; Freire, 1970). *Conquest* is the first step because Xicanas(os) are reduced to object status. Once the mental conquest is established, the dominant culture *divides and rules.* Schools pit Xicanas(os) against each other by using class, culture, gender, academic success and/or failure. Xicanas(os) are *manipulated* to believe that acceptance and success in schools comes by demonstrated silence, non-critical behavior, submissive behavior towards the teacher, and total acceptance of authority. The three out of four points of domination; *conquest, divide and rule, manipulation*, opens the door to a *cultural invasion* in which Xicanas(os) do not see themselves in the context of the primary culture in which they exist. The oppressors use their academic institutions to impose their agenda of the world and, without physical force, influence Xicanas(os) to view reality through the lens of the invader (Freire, 1970).

The four steps of an anti-dialogical matrix lead to the possible self-destruction of Xicana(o) youth. The self-destruction experience is not visible to the outside world because it is an internalized oppression that Xicanas(os) perpetuate upon themselves by taking on the values, ideologies, and thought processes that belittle them and view them as objects and not subjects. Shor and Freire (1987) propose that this internalized oppression can manifest itself in several dimensions, but two ways in particular: academic/social failure or academic/social success. If a Xicana(o) chooses academic/social failure, he or she attempts to "sabotage the curriculum" (Shor & Freire, 1987, p. 125) and consequently is alienated from the school community. Xicanas(os)

who take on an academic/social success position are looked upon as non-threatening and can fall into three categories. Shor and Freire (1987) describe these three categories as a) passive acceptance – a student who writes down whatever he or she is told, b) non-rebel – a student who will not rebel and knows how to get by, and c) assimilationist – a student who assimilates and actively supports the *status quo* (p. 124). Whichever path is chosen, the cost is great because Xicanas(os) are subjugated to a "culture of silence" (Shor & Friere, 1987, p. 124) and exist in a false reality with no room to transform their world or express their authentic voice.

Theoretical Explanation

Indigenous Mexicano elders say that one of the most powerful energies known, Quetzalcoatl, had to make a decision one day, to leave his people, the Mexicas. Because of the many problems leaving was the best thing to do. Before he left, Quetzalcoatl gathered the people around him and said,

> I must go, but before I do, I want you to be prepared for what will come. You will face many struggles, but the hardest will be the loss of memory. As time goes by, who you are as a people, your traditions, your values, your language, will all be lost. This loss will cause pain and confusion, but don't despair, for the memory will come back. It will not be easy, many struggles will be endured, but slowly our people will begin to hear the drumbeat of their heart. The sound and feel of the drumbeat will be the signal to claim, that which had been lost so long ago.

The Process of Conscientization

How does the process of conscientization come to be? Does a person wake up one day and decide that they are living a false reality and want to change it? Peruvian Indigenous theory (Paiva, 1992) proffers that a person experiences a moment in their life, in which all that he or she knows, believes, or feels comes to a sudden halt. This sudden halt may be represented, in this case, as the *epiphany* a Xicana(o) experiences when lifting the veil of reality for the first time. These *epiphanies* occur differently for each individual. Some Xicanas(os) might experience it as Darder (1995) states, when they engage in opportunities to surround themselves with members of their own cultural community. This engagement is important because members of the same cultural community can serve as "critically conscious people with whom [Xicanas(os)] can identify and interact" (Darder, 1995, p. 41). The classroom environment, at any level, can be the awakening moment Xicanas(os) need to begin the process of conscientization. The following statement by Darder (1995) addresses this process:

> The bicultural voice is awakened through a critical process of dialogue and reflection within the context of the classroom, when students find opportunities to reflect together on their common lived experiences, their personal perceptions of the bicultural process, and their common responses to issues of cultural domination, alienation, resisting, negotiation, and affirmation. (p. 42)

Whatever the experiences may be, a choice is presented when the door is finally opened (Paiva, 1992). A decision of conscientization is a process of constant self-reflection. The easier path to choose is one of silence. A choice of silence doesn't force a Xicana(o) to change but

allows him or her to continue on as usual (Paiva, 1992). If a Xicana(o) chooses to claim his or her authentic voice, it is a decision, which will go against the grain and definitely be viewed by the dominant culture as divisive and un-American (Darder, 1995). The life of concientization, reflection, dialogue, and transformation challenges what a Xicana(o) bases their reality in and puts into question one's identity, even if it is an identity constructed under false pretences.

When a Xicana(o) steps through the door and says, "Yes, I will begin this process," instinctively one wants to seek help. Seeking guidance is necessary, dialogue is essential to process ones reality but it is important to remember that another cannot lift the veil for anyone else, "No one can, however, unveil the world for another. Subject may initiate the unveiling on behalf of others, but the others must also become subjects of this act" (Freire, 1970, p. 150). Once a Xicana(o) becomes a "subject of this act" (Freire, 1970, p. 150), they will experience a process of conscientization: self/reflection, others/dialogue, and action/transformation.

Self/Reflection

When Xicanas(os) come to the realization that they can be subjects of their reality, it can be a joyful and painful moment. It becomes a point of relief because a weight carried for so many years is finally lifted. The imposed silent voice that lived in seclusion emerges and shouts to the world, "I am here, I exist, and I am not going anywhere." During this process a legitimate sense of anger overwhelms the Xicana(o) and allows them to place into context the injustices experienced (Freire, 1998). For many, this anger becomes a fire of motivation that "fuels the desire to resist, create change, and continue the fight" (C. Cintrón, personal communication, March 10, 2002). Freire (1998) states that it is understandable to have this anger, but as a Xicana(o), one cannot let it get out of control. If the anger controls the situation, then one is not

allowing room for reflection and will be demonstrating reactionary attitudes instead of critical ones (Freire, 1998).

One cannot process the experiences if they do not reflect. When the anger is processed and let go, a Xicana(o) can come to an understanding of who they are and forgive themselves. Even though the Xicana(o) committed no wrong, guilt sets in, due to the false reality in which they existed. Coming to terms with this new understanding helps Xicanas(os) to open up their heart, spirit, and mind to love. Loving oneself is a beginning step to finding justice (Paiva, 1992). In search of the justice, Xicanas(os) make the link to naming the world and seeing themselves as subjects of that world.

To be in relationship with the world, Xicanas(os) must recognize that a balance and focus sustained in life enables him or her to answer the question "¿Quién Soy Yo? – Who Am I?" (Paiva, 1992/2002). In answering this question, Xicanas(os) change their thought-language process and place themselves in a reality in which they can understand their purpose; a purpose that is based on the present, created by the past, for the future to create change (Paiva, 1992). This purpose works towards Xicanas(os) living as liberated people and calls for them to be human, live a critical life with humility (Darder,1998), not for oneself, but for others. The objective is to understand life, find what we want out of it, and recognize that it will be forever unfinished because the world and our reality is in constant change (Freire, 1998). By practicing a life of conscientization Xicanas(os) can open their eyes to comprehend who they were, who they are, and who they will be (Paiva, 1992), "Todo empieza en la cabeza , como tu piensas asi eres, todo lo que desees sera. Si tu lo quires empieza en una idea que va adquirriendo forma por la fuerza y amor que le pones" (Paiva, 1992, p. 93). "Everything starts in your head, how you think

is how you are, everything that you desire shall come to be. If you want something it starts with an idea that takes form with the strength and love you put into it" (Paiva, 1992/2002, p. 93).

Others/Dialogue

> When you individually feel yourself most free, if this feeling is not a social feeling, if you are not able to use your recent freedom to help others to be free by transforming the totality of society, then you are exercising only an individualistic attitude towards liberation. (Shor & Freire, 1987, p. 109)

In the process of conscientization, a key component is the Xicanas(os) seeing themselves as subjects of their reality. Simultaneously, as the quote states, if one's purpose does not include working so others can be free, one is only perpetuating the oppression the United States government fosters. The trap of perpetuation is easy to fall into if Xicanas(os) cannot see the struggle for liberation outside of them. Xicanas(os) and other people of color can get caught in conflict with each other and create havoc. The issue of race, amongst people of color, finds itself in the forefront of the struggle, when in reality it is a socially constructed term used to keep the focus and real issues unclear. The various cultures and ethnic groups that co-exist in the United States need to respect each other's similarities and differences and understand that personal liberation does not occur in isolation of others struggles. Freire once stated at a conference (as cited by Darder, 1998) "I cannot perceive in my mind how blacks in America can be liberated without Chicanos being liberated, or how Chicanos can be liberated without Native Americans being liberated, or Native Americans liberated without whites being liberated" (p. 28). Mental,

spiritual, and physical freedom, for Xicanas(os), in the context of the United States can only exist together in solidarity with others.

This coalition building has opened a dialogue among Xicanas(os) and other historically oppressed groups (Puerto Ricans, African Americans, Native Americans, Asian, women, and gay/lesbians). The act of dialogue is essential because it demonstrates a commitment to others and the world. Dialogue becomes a praxis that requires Xicana(o)s to act with humility and engage with others in the act of knowing and thinking about the world (Collins, 2000). Listening is also part of the dialogue because it recognizes the existence of others. It is important to remember, as Freire (1998) has proposed that the ideas and experiences of individuals are not the only ones to exist. By listening, Xicanas(os) are working towards fostering an environment where all who engage can begin to claim their *authentic voice*. In this way, the praxis that transpires from discussion, dialogue, and listening becomes a frame of mind in which Xicanas(os) serve as agents of humanity. Reflection is key. Reflection and dialogue become synonymous, because reflection with no dialogue or dialogue with no reflection undermines real transformation (Freire, 1970). If dialogue and reflection are not looked at within the same spectrum, one risks killing the dialogue and unintentionally acting as the oppressor.

Action/Transformation

Action/Transformation helps Xicanas(os) understand the limits inhibiting them and work towards transforming them. Xicanas(os), who are at this point in the process of conscientization, must allow their actions to speak for themselves and demonstrate the sincerity and humility with which they come to the table (Paiva, 1992). This is critical because people are at different points of claiming authentic voice. One cannot impose what needs to be done, if all do not understand

why or how the limitation takes place. If a Xicana(o) does not take the time, as Freire (1970) suggests to reflect on the dialogical matrix, then they risk becoming the oppressor at a different level.

The dialogical matrix (Freire, 1970) consists of *cooperation, unification, organization and cultural action*. In relation to the Xicana(o) experience, *cooperation* represents the dialogue needed among the people. Through dialogue, no one owns anyone else, and whoever takes on a leadership role cannot guide the people blindly. *Unification* emerges because Xicanas(os) are able to come to know how and why the limitations exist. Understanding the existence of limitations, people are able to re-create their existence and make it more human (Freire, 1970). *True organization* emerges when Xicanas(os) re-create the limits because they are no longer just mere spectators. Xicanas(os) take the initiative to pose problems and relate them to historical realities in order to take action. *Cultural action,* a culmination of the three elements, "creates dialectical realities of permanence and change" (Freire, 1970, p. 160). With transformation at the forefront, Xicanas(os) can begin to free themselves from alienation (Friere, 1970). The following quote by Paiva's (1992) supports Freire's position:

> La fraternidad universal será un hecho cuando el amor individual no queda confirmado unicamente a nuestra familia, debemos aprender a ser universales, debemos amar a todos y servir desde donde estamos colocados en la vida. Este es el verdadero trabajo y el único camino que logrará realmente nuestra superación, nuestra evolución y finalmente nuestra crecimiento. (Paiva, 1992, p. 122)

> The universal fraternity will come to be realized when individual love does not stay conformed to only our family, we should learn to be universal, we should

> love everyone and serve from the center point of our lives. This is the true work and the only road that will achieve our advancement, our evolvement and finally our growth. (Paiva, 1992/2002, p. 122)

To apply the dialogical matrix (Freire, 1970) to a new process of conscientization is the point Xicanas(os) engage in the act of being fully human. At this point Xicanas(os) act upon the world to de-mystify the myths that have kept them as objects of their own reality. Claiming *authentic voice* is a humanitarian perspective in transforming the world.

Conclusion/Personal Reflection

Arguments exist that state "authenticity' or "authentic voice" can never truly be reached because realities are socially constructed. Individuals might experience an epiphany and see themselves in the context of a new reality, but in truth that reality is constructed to manipulate the individual. I take the position that when Xicanas(os) understand that manipulation and alienation exist, this realization becomes the stepping-stone to experiencing the process of conscientization. It needs to be clear that conscientization is not a goal one reaches and then one is done. Conscientization, as stated earlier, it is a process of reflection and action that is ongoing.

Manipulation by the dominant society exists and will always exist, but if Xicanas(os) are aware of it and remain subjects of their reality, it can be challenged and transformed. All one has to do is critically reflect on the War on Terrorism news coverage, to see how people are being manipulated by the media and the information presented. There exist individuals and groups who recognize the deceit and are challenging it. Knowing what is in front of you and comprehending why and how it got there is when the transformation can take shape and form. The realities and

the experiences one confronts are in constant movement and change, therefore reflection, dialogue, and transformation are the keys to counteracting the constructed and manipulated realities the oppressor places in our paths.

A democratic society is a goal Xicanas(os) must strive for. Through education and the act of educating, Xicanas(os) can create a form of intervention in the world (Freire, 1998). This intervention can manifest itself as Freire states (1998) through "aspiration for radical change in society in such areas as economics, human relations, prosperity, the right to employment, to land, to education, and to health" (p. 99). The Xicana(o) experience and the process of conscientization shape an understanding of the human experience.

The ongoing process of conscientization is essential because Xicanas(os) can then become authors of their reality and self-determine their role in society. Documenting this demonstrates to the dominant culture, but mostly to Xicanas(os), that there is no need to be subordinate and change can occur. Now, will the change be visible? Will it happen from one day to the next? No, it will not happen right before our eyes because the resistance and process of conscientizacion is forever unfinished (Freire, 1998). What is most important to remember, however, is that the process of concientization is slowly emerging in Xicana(o) communities across the country. That this is occurring for me and others like me gives us all hope that El Movimiento is alive

Footnotes

1 I would like to explain my rationale for using "X" instead of "Ch" when speaking about Xicanas. This explanation is two fold. During the height of the Chicana(o) Movement, specifically in the Southwest, the majority of people involved were of Mexican descent. It became the norm to associate the Chicana(o) Movement with the political, cultural, and social struggles of Mexicans born in the United States. Throughout the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, the Southwest region of the United States, has seen an influx of migration from not only Mexico but also from Central and South America. This migration has had a tremendous impact on the demographics of the southwest, which subsequently changed the direction in the Chicana(o) Movement. U.S. born Central and South Americans began to experience similar social injustices as the U.S. born Mexicans. Many of these U.S. born Central and South Americans could identify with the goals and objectives of the Chicana(o) movement. Slowly, as changes surfaced, the term Chicano transformed to represent the political movement of Mexicans, Central, and South Americans. For example, within the Chicana(o) Movement one could find individuals who identified themselves as Chicanas(os) from El Salvador and/or Peru, thus stating a political position, and commitment to the Chicana(o) Movimiento and their ancestral origins.

During the last decade of the twentieth century, Chicanos began to view their position not only as political but also as spiritual. It became clear, that in order to make a spiritual connection and understand the beliefs and teaching of one's elders, it was fundamental to understand one's existence and purpose as a Chicana(o). Early in the Movement, many made the connection

directly to the Azteca (Mexica) people, but with time Chicanos realized that not all who identify as "Chicanos" come from Azteca/Mexica ancestry. Chicanas(os) began to replace the (Ch) in Chicana(o) with "X" symbolizing the struggle as one that is all encompassing of different indigenous nations, in the United States, throughout "Turtle Island," "Pacha Mama," and "Las America." The Chicana(o) Movement evolved from a Chicana(o) movement to a Xicana(o) Indigina movement (*sin fronteras, with out borders*). This change has been instrumental for Xicana(o) Indigenas in understanding the level of influence they have in the United States and how that can create social and political change in Mexico, Central, and South America.

What needs to be acknowledged is that in El Movimiento, the level of consciousness and conscientization varies. This is understandable since the process of transformation and reflection is ongoing. Although a younger generation identifies with the term "Xicana(o)" many still hold on to the more traditional referent "Chicana(o)."

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